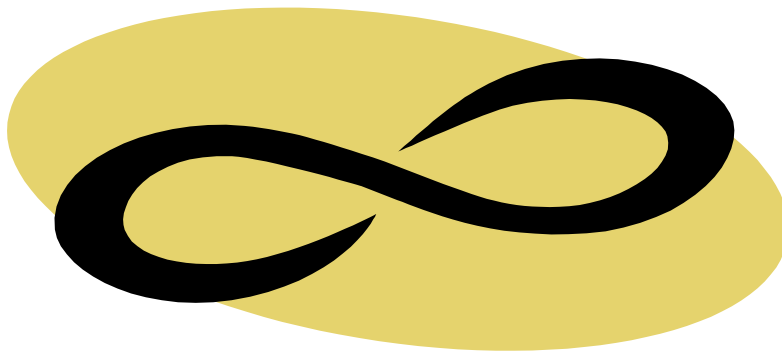


# **JUNEAU COUNTY CORONER**

The Juneau County Coroner is a constitutionally-elected official mandated by law to serve the people of Juneau County and oversee the administrative duties of the Office of Coroner. The coroner serves as the chief medicolegal death investigator of Juneau County and conducts thorough and independent medical-legal death investigations. Both public and confidential records of such investigations are also maintained by the coroner.

The coroner is significantly involved in the safety of the public and serves as a protector and advocate of the people. All deaths where the decedent was not attended by a licensed physician for whatever cause are investigated by the Coroner/Deputy Coroner of the Coroner's Office who is also responsible for determining the manner and cause of each death. The office sustains teamwork in its death investigations and dispenses consideration and respect for the health and well-being of Juneau County residents. The Juneau County Coroner and Deputy Coroners serve approximately 26,000 people and countless tourists in its 768 square miles of land and 72 square miles of water and are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The Juneau County Coroner treats every death as important as it has profound implications for survivors. Ensuring that the proper steps and procedures are taken at the scene of a death to reassure family members of the cause and manner of death is a key element in maintaining citizen confidence in local officials. Even though the coroner does not need permission to conduct a death investigation from the next of kin, he/she stills conduct his/her authority over the scene with the utmost respect and care. A death investigation may be lengthy, depending on the circumstances, but the coroner hastens to complete the investigation as soon as possible for the sake of the family.



**The following deaths are reportable to the Juneau County Coroner's Office:**

- All deaths in which there are unexplained, unusual, or suspicious circumstances;
- All homicides or suicides, known or suspected;
- All deaths following an abortion;
- All deaths due to poisoning, whether homicidal, suicidal, or accidental;
- All deaths following accidents, whether injury is or is not the primary cause of death;
- All deaths in which a physician is not in attendance or has not been in actual attendance within 30 days prior to death;
- When a physician refuses to sign the death certificate;
- When after reasonable effort, a physician cannot be obtained to sign the medical certification, or within 6 days after pronouncement of death or sooner under circumstances which the Coroner or Medical Examiner determines to be an emergency;
- Death of any inmate who is institutionalized in the Juneau County Jail, Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center, or the New Lisbon Correctional Institute, shall be immediately reported to the Juneau County Coroner's Office;
- All deaths occurring within 24 hours of admission to a hospital;
- All deaths occurring in a hospital emergency room;
- All death associated with diagnostic or therapeutic procedures;
- All deaths of individuals who were in the custody of law enforcement officials;
- All deaths wherein the body is unidentified or unclaimed;
- Sudden infant death syndrome;
- All deaths suspected to be due to infectious or contagious disease wherein the diagnosis and extent of disease are undetermined at the time of death;
- All deaths involving motor vehicles, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, and boats;
- Occupational or industrial deaths;
- All cases where human or unidentified remains are discovered outside of a cemetery or documented burial plot;

## **Duties of the Juneau County Coroner**

### **Death Investigation**

- Reporting to the scene of death when notified (24 hours a day 7 days a week)
- Investigating the death scene, independent of other departments or agencies
- Determining and establishing scene safety for all investigative personnel
- Making a positive identification of the deceased
- Pronouncing death
- Determining approximate date and time of death
- Photographing scene and body
- Observing and recording the environmental condition surrounding the body and its relation to other objects
- Examining the body for injury, wounds, trauma, etc.
- Properly collecting and processing evidence relevant to the scene and body
- Identifying, preserving, and transporting evidence
- Interviewing and obtaining statements from persons involved in or witness to the incident
- Taking possession of personal effects as deemed necessary
- Preserving the chain of evidence recovered from the scene
- Notifying the next of kin
- Assisting the family if at the scene
- Obtaining biological samples as necessary
- Ordering of and/or attending autopsies and diagnostic testing to assist in determination and documentation of cause and manner of death
- Contacting a funeral home
- Preparing the body for transportation and/or release to the funeral home
- Removing the decedent from the scene in a respectful manner
- Insuring the scene is secured before leaving the scene
- Receiving/Documenting burial-removal-transit permits from funeral homes
- Obtaining medical records and other historical facts of the decedent to form a social and medical history
- Evaluating the decedent's medical history
- Determining and documenting cause and manner of death
- Certifying and completing the death certificate
- Documenting historical and chronological facts and findings in an unbiased report
- Rendering of objective investigative information to local law enforcement and legal authorities
- Properly securing and storing documents and evidence, including weapons and pharmaceuticals

## **Follow-Up Investigation**

- Recording of all investigative reports and summation of same
- Coordinating all investigative agencies involved
- Acting as the central depository for all records relative to a death investigation
- Working with and interacting with law enforcement agencies, funeral homes, ambulance personnel, medical examiners and other forensic experts, nursing homes, medical personnel, etc.
- Releasing personal effects to next of kin
- Filling out mandatory reports for a variety of departments and agencies, including: DOT, DHS, DOC, DCI, WCA, insurance companies, etc.
- Writing a clear, concise, and accurate report, finalizing the death investigation
- Distributing reports to family or other interested persons

## **Special/Other Duties**

- Providing testimony in court or at depositions
- Notifying the proper agencies when only remains are discovered
- Using forensic experts in the field of pathology, odontology, genetics, etc
- Occasionally procuring organ donations
- Issuing cremation permits after viewing body and making inquiry as to cause and manner of death
- Issuing disinterment permits
- Continuing education pertaining to the medicolegal investigation of death and office administration
- Keeping abreast of all new statutes, information, and policies appropriate to the office
- Routinely corresponding with county, state, and government officials
- Copying and sending reports to families, law enforcement, state agencies, insurance companies, attorneys, or other interested parties
- Corresponding or meeting with next of kin or other significant individuals
- Assisting other county coroners and medical examiners

## **Administrative Duties**

- Providing for coroner service coverage on a 24 hour, 7 day a week basis for the county
- Keeping accurate records to provide easy retrieval of said records
- Adopting coroner office policies
- Acquiring forensic supplies necessary to death investigation
- Appointing, supervising, and training competent deputies to act on behalf of the coroner in his or her absence
- Developing written guidelines for reporting deaths within the county
- Reporting deaths in a timely manner to federal, state, and local authorities, if the situation so requires
- Preparing a county plan of action for the mortuary section of the county emergency government plan and act as mortuary office in the event of a multiple fatality disaster
- Participating in and attending official/civilian meetings as requested
- Teaching others at every level, including medical, legal, paramedical, and the citizenry about issues in medicolegal death investigations that promote the public health and safety
- Generating annual reports
- Preparing an annual budget for income and expenditures
- Providing for the budgetary administration of the Office by the responsible dispersal of public funds
- Having the power to subpoena records or cause the subpoena of records by the local judicial court or obtain access to records and information concerning the death